



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

How may I help you?

The hospitality industry is the backbone of our industry. Visitors who have received great customer service will return again and again to experience this amazing state if they know they will be appreciated by their hosts. It's up to us to make these memorable experiences that stay with our visitors for a lifetime.

To ensure we are offering the best customer service we can, the Arizona Office of Tourism offers Grand Impressions Customer Service Workshops. This program is designed to enhance the customer service skills of front-line employees within the tourism industry and individuals that deal directly with visitors. Within the workshop there is a great presentation on state attractions so customer service representatives can offer the latest news on tourist attractions around the state.

If you are interested in learning new customer service techniques, I encourage you to attend this workshop, because as the saying goes, you don't get a second chance to make a first impression.

For more information about the Grand Impression Workshops being offered May 30 and June 6, please refer to the news brief in the ***AOT News Flash*** section.

Have a great week.

Margie R. Emmenau

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

SAVE the Date: Grand Impressions Workshops are here!

The Grand Impressions workshop is a full day of education and training designed to empower tourism and visitor services professionals by offering:

- A customer service training program, featuring unique ways to get you and your staff to think "outside the jar" - if you miss this opportunity, you'll be green with envy!
- An amazing presentation on Arizona tourism attractions by Brian Lang.
- May 30 – A tour of local attractions including the Pimeria Alta, Historic Court House, Art Gallery, Kino Springs, Hacienda Corona de Guevavi and Wine tasting.
- June 6 - A tour of the Flagstaff's Lowell Observatory and a visit to the Flagstaff Arboretum, complete with a Live Birds of Prey Demonstration by the High Country Raptors.

Workshop participants will receive a certificate of completion, a complimentary lunch and free resource materials from presenters. **(Community and Attractions attendees: Please feel free to bring your information to share with participants.)**

The Grand Impressions workshops are free of charge to those who wish to participate. Reservations are required and will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis as seating is limited. For more information, or to make a reservation for the workshop, contact Meghan Dorn at **602-364-3708** or mdorn@azot.gov.

Workshop Dates and Locations:

Nogales, Arizona

May 29 from 6-8 p.m.

Grand Impressions Attendees Reception at Esplendor Resort Terrace - The City of Nogales is rolling out the red carpet for those who wish to arrive the night before and immerse themselves in the culture!

[Esplendor Resort](#)

1069 Camino Caralampi
Rio Rico, Arizona 85648
Phone: 520-281-1901

May 30

Grand Impressions Workshop

[Esplendor Resort](#)

1069 Camino Caralampi
Rio Rico, Arizona 85648
Phone: 520-281-1901

- Local Visitor Information Center Managers please arrive at 8:30 a.m.
- All other participants please arrive at 9:30 a.m.
- Workshop will conclude at 5 p.m.

Flagstaff, Arizona

June 6, 2008

Grand Impressions Workshop

[Lowell Observatory](#)

1400 W. Mars Hill Road

Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Phone: 928.233.3210

- Local Visitor Information Center Managers please arrive at 8:30 a.m.
- All other participants please arrive at 9:30 a.m.
- Workshop will conclude at 5 p.m.

Deadline Extended for Governor's Tourism Award Nominations!

AOT is extending the deadline to submit your nominations for the **2008 Governor's Tourism Awards**. These industry awards honor individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions during the past year for the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

The awards will be presented at the 28th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson on July 10, 2008.

All submissions must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 30, 2008.

Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) section of www.azot.gov for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms. For more information, contact Kiva Couchon at 602-364-3724 or via e-mail at kcouchon@azot.gov.

To register for the conference please visit, www.aztourismconference.com.

Call for 2009 Events!

AOT is requesting dates for major events taking place in 2009. Please be sure to indicate the specific dates and note if events are able to accommodate or are specifically geared for tour groups. We are already receiving requests for 2009 calendar information from both media and tour operators. Please continue to send the remainder of 2008 dates if they have not yet been sent. Any information on events and 2009 dates may be forwarded to Marjorie Magnusson at mmagnusson@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

AOT Hosts 2nd Annual Arizona Road Show

Recently the Arizona Office of Tourism conducted the 2nd Annual Arizona Road Show in Mexico City and Guadalajara. During the week-long event the Arizona delegation conducted seminars and interactive games for 187 tour operators and travel agents. Additionally, eight tour operator appointments were scheduled in Mexico City and 12 travel trade representatives attended a special dinner in Guadalajara. Delegation members included Mary Rittmann and Barbara Jackson, Arizona Office of Tourism; Ashlee Ciora, Scottsdale CVB; Maria Delgado, Phoenix CVB; Kimberly Janes, City of Chandler; Michael Martin, Tempe CVB; Kristi Mastrantuono, Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa; Josilyn Albert, Arizona Biltmore Resort and Kate

Cavaliere, Westcor. For additional information please contact Mary Rittmann at 602 364 3730 or via e-mail mrtrittmann@azot.gov.

Industry News

International Visits up 15% in February

The Commerce Department announced that 3.3 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in February, an increase of 15 percent over February 2007. Total visitation year-to-date in 2008 was up 13 percent from the first two months of 2007. International visitors spent \$11.6 billion in February, up 26 percent from February 2007. Overseas arrivals were up 11 percent in February and 10 percent year-to-date. Overseas markets have grown for 10 consecutive months. Canadian visitation grew 24 percent over February 2007, while arrivals from Mexico, among those traveling to interior U.S. points, were up 8 percent in February. Visitation from Western Europe, a key market for the U.S., was up 17 percent in February and 14 percent year-to-date, accounting for 43 percent of all overseas arrivals. Details at www.tinet.ita.doc.gov. (Special to TA)

AMEX Says People Still Traveling, Just Differently

Despite U.S. economic woes, the American Express Consumer Travel Network saw a 13 percent spike in business for the first quarter of 2008. At the AmEx Fine Hotels and Resorts Forum last week, Lynne Biggar, senior vice president and general manager of the network, said people are still taking trips, they're just doing it differently. "We aren't seeing people who aren't traveling, we are just seeing changes in how they do it," Biggar said. "People are going on shorter trips, staying at affordable resorts, and spending a little less, but they're still traveling." Audrey Hendley, vice president of marketing for the AmEx Consumer Travel Network, said the hottest international region is Latin America, with Belize and Argentina leading the pack. Hendley said the two destinations offer great quality for a very affordable price. (www.TravelAgentCentral.com, 5/16)

More Business Travelers Going Green

U.S. business travelers are increasingly making daily choices to reduce their environmental impact, and they have specific expectations about the green practices hotels should be adopting today, according to a recent survey commissioned by Deloitte. The survey shows business travelers have begun do some green practices routinely: nearly seven of 10 business travelers (69 percent) say they always turn off the lights and one out of three (31 percent) always adjusts the heat/air conditioner when leaving the room. Roughly a third of travelers surveyed are keenly concerned about green travel. Some 34 percent "seek out hotels that are environmentally friendly," just as 38 percent have researched green lodging facilities either online or by asking friends and relatives. Similarly, 28 percent say they would be willing to pay 10 percent more to stay in a green lodging facility. Special to TA; (www.TravelWeekly.com, 5/19)

Travel Promotion Act Now Has 200 House Co-Sponsors, Says TIA

The Travel Industry Association says 202 U.S. Representatives and 42 Senators have signed on as co-sponsors of the Travel Promotion Act, now pending in Congress. The legislation would create a public-private partnership to help explain U.S. security policies and attract additional visitors to the U.S. A travel promotion campaign created by the legislation would be financed by the private sector and a matching fee from foreign travelers--at no cost to U.S. taxpayers. The TIA announcement did not say how many senators have signed on as co-sponsors of the legislation. Details at 202-408-2172. (Special to TA)

Fairmont Scottsdale Princess Changes Names

The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess has shortened its name to Fairmont Scottsdale. "By retiring the Princess name, we intend to communicate clearly that the Fairmont Scottsdale has entered a new chapter in its storied history and that it now offers guests a distinctly different ambience," said Laurence Geller, president and CEO of Strategic Hotels & Resorts, the property's owner. The resort just completed a \$20 million makeover that included 69 new Fairmont Gold guestrooms and a Fairmont Gold lounge; the Dorada , a 3,700-square-foot, two-story super suite located on a private enclave on the resort grounds; the addition of Bourbon Steak, a new restaurant, and the opening of the Stone Rose lounge. (www.ModernAgent.com, 5/22)

Chinese Group Leisure Travel to U.S. Begins in June

The China National Tourism Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce announced Friday that starting June 17, Chinese leisure travelers may travel to the U.S. in group tours under a memorandum of understanding signed by both countries. CNTA Chairman Shao Qiwei will lead the inaugural Chinese tour group on June 17 to Washington, D.C. "This MOU opens China's growing market to U.S. travel and tourism industries," said Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez. "Now, more Chinese visitors can experience America's hospitality, cultural diversity and natural beauty," he said. The launch of business for Chinese group leisure travel to the U.S. will continuously expand promotion of China-U.S. tourism and help broaden the exchange and cooperation between the two countries, CNTA Chairman Shao Qiwei said.

The announcement was hailed by the National Tour Association, which called the deal a "breakthrough bilateral agreement," said NTA President Lisa Simon. NTA is the first and only U.S. organization approved by the CNTA to facilitate Chinese inbound leisure group travel to the U.S. Details at www.tinet.info@ita.doc.gov. (*Special to TA*)

Report Says Spas a \$250 Billion Global Business

The global spa economy is estimated to be over \$250 billion, according to a report released this week at the 2008 Global Spa Summit in New York. The report by SRI International estimates core spa industry revenues are \$60.3 billion. The industry also generates an additional \$194 billion in spa-related hospitality, tourism and real estate, the report said. When broader spa-related industries such as beauty, nutrition and fitness were factored into the equation, last year's global health and wellness market exceeded \$1 trillion, according to the report. In a breakdown of spa revenue by nation, the U.S. emerges on top, with revenue of more than \$12 billion, followed by Japan (\$5.7 billion) and Germany (\$3.8 billion) Others on the list include France, Italy, the U.K. and China. (www.TravelWeekly.com, 5/22)

Congratulations to Phoenix for Being Most Affordable U.S. City

Hotwire® announced the results of its third annual Travel Value Index study, naming Phoenix as the top 2008 destination for value minded travelers. The award showcases the top 10 cities where savvy travelers can find the best value and entertainment options as they plan their next vacation. The survey is based on a statistical model that evaluates 50 U.S. markets for consumer vacation value. The discount prices found on Hotwire.com™ are compared to published prices to help to determine which places offer the lowest rates and greatest discounts to travelers. The Hotwire® Travel Value Index ranks the 50 U.S. markets across three categories: Discounts on air, rental car and hotel; Low prices on air, rental car and hotel; Affordable entertainment, overall appeal and choice of accommodations.

According to the Hotwire® Travel Value Index, the top ten U.S. places for value vacations this year include: Phoenix; Dallas-Fort Worth; Orlando; Denver; Atlanta; Los Angeles; Washington D.C.; Kansas City; Miami; and Milwaukee.